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### GOING ON CIRCUIT.

BY 'ONE WHO GOES.'

FOR centuries it has been the custom of the sovereign to commission the judges of the High Court to proceed from time to time to the principal town in each county of England there to try offenders and to administer justice. The custom is said, indeed, to have been begun by King Alfred; but it seems more certain that it was first made a regular practice by Henry II., a monarch who did much to establish legal institutions in the country and to initiate Englishmen in the duty of obeying the law. From the time of his reign unto the present day the practice has been kept up with but very slight intermissions, and although it has undergone alteration and been shorn of perhaps a little of its pomp, it continues, and is likely to continue for many years to come.

At present, for this purpose England and Wales are divided into seven well-defined districts, each of which is called a circuit; and four times a year one (or more) of the Queen's Justices makes a circuit of each district, holding assizes in the county towns. When only criminal cases are tried, one judge goes to each town; but when civil cases are also taken, as happens usually twice a year, two judges go, and the civil and the criminal courts sit simultaneously. The judges usually arrange among themselves as to the different circuit that each shall take, and they decide beforehand on which day the assizes shall be held. The day that they arrive in each town is called 'commission' day, as they then display their royal commissions of what are called 'oyer and terminer' and of 'jail delivery.'

Their arrival on commission days was in old times an event of no little importance; and before the days of railways, many recollect how the sheriff, with the knights, squires, and justices of the peace of the county, went out on horseback to meet their lordships, to escort their carriage to the town, in a procession of much dignity and

importance. Nowadays, however, the luxurious richness of the sheriff's carriage and the gorgeousness of his servants' liveries form the principal feature in the pageant which conducts Her Majesty's legal representatives from the railway station to their lodgings. These lodgings are provided at the public expense, and are usually kept and set apart for this purpose alone.

The judges live there in comparative retirement, broken only by attending the sheriff's or the mayor's dinner, or by having some of the members of the bar to dine privately with them. As a companion in his solitude, each judge is, however, allowed to have with him a confidential secretary, who is dignified by the name of the judge's marshal. He is usually a young barrister, son of a brother-judge or friend, and his duties are more varied than onerous. He usually sits beside the judge on the bench, and knows always when to smile at his lordship's jokes. It is said that one of the most important qualifications for the position consists in being able to play a good rubber of whist; but perhaps this depends upon the judge. It is evident, however, that if the marshal performs no other service than that of keeping his lordship in good-humour, he nevertheless does much towards assisting the due administration of justice.

The circuits, as we have already said, are seven in number, and they are fairly well, though not quite accurately, described by their names. Thus, the Welsh circuit includes Wales and Cheshire; the Northern takes in from Lancashire to Cumberland; while Northumberland, Durham, and York form the North-eastern. The Western circuit extends from Hampshire to Cornwall; the South-eastern includes the south-east corner of England; while the remainder of the country is divided between the Oxford and the Midland circuits.

So far, we have dealt only with the bench; but perhaps the doings and etiquette of the bar form the most interesting part of circuit life. There is no statute, so far as we have ever heard, regulating the movements or manner of life of the learned counsel who attend the assizes; still, there

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are unwritten laws so strictly enforced that no man who has any desire for the company or respect of his fellows would willingly infringe them. If one conforms to the bar rules, circuit life is in every way agreeable; but if one sets them at defiance, it will be the life of a leper.

One of the most important rules is, that a barrister when he chooses a circuit is expected to stick to that circuit and not to go upon any other. If for some reason he finds the circuit he has chosen unsuitable, he may change once, but not oftener. If he is going on circuit at all—and no barrister is bound to go—he is also expected to choose his circuit early in his career; and he will not be allowed, without some special reason, to join a circuit after he has been called to the bar for more than three years. Counsel may attend, however, cases that are being tried on a circuit other than his own; but in order to do so he must be taken there 'specialy'—that is to say, he must not go unless he receive a special retainer varying with the circuit, but of not less than ten guineas over and above his ordinary fees.

The joining of a circuit, too, does not consist in taking any oath or making any formal judicial declaration; it merely consists in being admitted a member of the bar mess on that circuit; but it will appear from what has been already said that this implies a great deal more than the right to dine with one's fellows.

The manner of admission to the bar mess varies considerably on the different circuits. Some form of proposal is always necessary; and on some of the circuits the candidates require to be proposed by a Q.C. and seconded by a junior. It is usual, also, on some circuits to require the candidates to dine with the bar mess on three nights prior to their election, in order, it is presumed, that their future associates may learn whether or not they know how to behave at table.

The election takes place on what is called 'Grand Night,' a night set apart during the winter and summer circuits for business and special festivity. On some circuits the merits of the candidates are discussed, and the election takes place quietly at a business meeting held before dinner, the health of the candidates being proposed and drunk later in the evening, when they are called upon to reply. On others, however, the election takes place after dinner; a court is formed with the 'junior' as judge; the names of the candidates are brought forward by their proposers and their claims advocated; objections are heard; and then the judge gives his decision whether they shall be admitted or not. Of course, there is also a certain amount of paying to be done; it would be contrary to all legal practice were it otherwise. There is first of all the entrance fee, which varies from five to ten guineas according to the circuit; and besides this, every time a barrister goes on circuit he is called upon to pay a fee. On some circuits he has to pay so much for each town to which he may go; on others, a fixed sum, usually about two guineas, is charged if he goes at all. The 'junior' is the barrister, usually one of the younger members, appointed to collect these fees. The fees are, however, returned in kind, for they go into that all-important fund for which the wine treasurer is responsible, and which is expended on the purchase of wine to be consumed at the mess dinners. These dinners are held each

night in the respective towns during the assizes. An hotel is chosen in each town, and the mess keeps a stock of wine there, paying usually to the hotel-keeper about six pence corkage on each bottle drawn. He also provides the dinner, and charges five or six shillings for it to each person dining. These dinners are strictly limited to the members of the mess, except, perhaps, upon Grand Night, when one or two may be specially invited by the mess committee. Except upon these occasions, evening dress is neither expected nor desired, and a light-coloured coat is equally objectionable.

It should be noticed that the judges do not dine at the bar mess except upon rare occasions and upon special invitation. On some circuits the practice of inviting the judges is much more common than on others; but some idea of the frequency of the occurrence may be gathered from a statement which the writer heard made lately by one of our senior justices of the Queen's Bench, that he had only twice had the pleasure of dining with the bar since he had been made a judge, seventeen years ago.

These bar dinners constitute one of the most amusing and pleasant features of circuit life. Barristers are a wonderfully good-natured set of men, and there is perhaps no other profession the members of which are on better terms and less envious of each other. If a man is unaffected in manner and gentlemanly in behaviour, he is at once welcomed by his fellows; and it is his own fault if he does not quickly make friends. There is nothing like a dinner for developing this social quality. Once dine with a man and spend an enjoyable evening in his company, and dislike of him will be slow of growth.

After dinner it is difficult not to be agreeable; and counsel, old and young, freed for the time-being from the cares and troubles of clients, and no longer burdened with the necessity of appearing dignified, proceed to enjoy themselves. Wit sparkles with the champagne, jokes are made and stories are told. On Grand Nights the jokes give place to songs more or less humorous, often with a vigorous chorus, which is rendered with more spirit than harmony. Mock-trials, too, are frequently got up when the 'junior' of the circuit acts as judge, and learned Queen's Counsel are appointed for the prosecution and defence. These trials are frequently nothing more than pieces of sheer frolic. Some counsel is pitched upon for some offence wholly imaginary alike in law and in deed; a jury of counsel is impanelled, and the fun proceeds. The speeches may be as personal and disconnected as possible; but they must be witty and good-humoured. The culprit usually gets off, or at most is mulcted in a small fine, which goes into the wine fund.

But besides this, there is a regular system of fining on all circuits; but the extent to which it is carried varies greatly. On some circuits, where the payments made to the wine fund are small, these fines are much more common than when it is otherwise. These fines are perhaps valuable for enforcing circuit discipline and etiquette; but they are much more valuable for the purpose of increasing the stock and quality of the wine. Fining usually takes place on Grand Night, and the fines on some circuits are only enforced after the formality of a trial has been undergone. The acts for which a man is liable to be fined are

various and amusing ; for example, if a counsel be appointed a recorder or a revising barrister, he would be fined two or three guineas, these being serious offences. Getting married is another, but less serious, offence ; and on the birth of a son and heir a still further penalty is incurred.

The quality of the wine of course depends to some extent on the number of fines ; but it is, as a general rule, remarkably good. There is rather an amusing story told, however, of some men who were tried at one of the assizes for theft. The theft consisted in breaking into some barrels of wine which were on their way to one of the bar cellars, and of consuming part of the contents. The counsel for the defence had not many facts to allege in favour of the men, but he set up the defence that in order to constitute theft the act must be done for the purpose of gain, and that no one who knew anything of the bar wine could possibly imagine that there was any gain to be got out of drinking it. If they were found guilty, he further suggested that the worst punishment that the judge could possibly inflict upon them was to compel them to consume the remainder of the liquor. The judge, however, thought otherwise.

The etiquette to be observed on circuit generally is, however, by no means elaborate. A man is expected to behave as a gentleman, and to do nothing outré, either in dress or otherwise. It was considered absolutely necessary at one time that all barristers on circuit should travel only by first-class carriages, but this practice is gradually falling into disuse ; and the younger men generally manage to go second, and even third class. One rule, however, that is enforced with some rigour is, that counsel staying in hotels must not make use of the public rooms, for the reason, it is said, that they may not meet the witnesses, solicitors, and others who have perhaps come to the town in connection with the cases to be tried. It might lead, it is supposed, to 'touting' for work, a practice against which all bar etiquette is opposed.

Although they may not use the public rooms, it is by no means usual for them to take private sitting-rooms. This is a luxury in which only those with large practices can indulge. The hotels, however, at which the barristers stay usually set apart a room or two for the separate use of the bar, and in these the barristers have breakfast together, and they form a meeting-place at night. A great deal of friendly intercourse and good-humoured chaff goes on in these common rooms, and this is one of the many means by which the members of the bar are able to become intimate with one another in a way which would be almost impossible in London. Every member of the bar mess, be he an overworked and eminent Queen's Counsel, or a newly-elected briefless junior, is presumed to be on an equality with every other, and in addressing one another privately such terms as 'Sir' or 'Mr' are neither given nor expected.

Circuit life is undoubtedly pleasant. Besides the change of scene, the barrister is able after the court rises, or earlier, if his services are not required, to explore the surrounding country, and enjoy alike the beauty of the scenery and the freshness of the air. He is not even incommoded with a tall hat, which, although indis-

pensable in town, is rarely seen on circuit. Not unseldom, too, during the summer assizes a cricket team, composed of the younger members of the mess, play some local Eleven, and enjoy an amusing, if not highly scientific, game. The social clubs, too, in the assize towns are very often thrown open for the time being to the barristers, and they are welcomed alike to public and to private hospitality.

These, of course, are advantages which the unemployed reap to a much greater extent than the busy men. They too, however, find one great advantage on circuit, and that lies in the fact that all fees on circuit are paid at once, and there is none of that weary waiting which junior counsel often find so exasperating in town. If one can enjoy but little of the festivities of circuit life, there is, nevertheless, no inconsiderable satisfaction in finding one's balance at the bank substantially increased ; for going on circuit, however agreeable, is certainly not inexpensive.

## MY SHIPMATE LOUISE.

THE ROMANCE OF A WRECK.

BY W. CLARK RUSSELL,  
Author of the *Wreck of the Grosvenor*, etc.

### CHAPTER XVIII.—ADRIFT.

THERE was a small deck-house standing abaft the jagged ends of the stump of the mainmast, a low-pitched, somewhat narrow, and rather long structure, with a door facing the wheel, or where the wheel had stood, and a couple of small windows on either hand, the glass of which was entirely gone.

'The lonely watchman of this wreck is still at home, doubtless waiting to receive us,' said the lieutenant, pointing to the little building. 'Shall we pay him a visit ?'

'Oh yes ; let us see everything that there may be to look at,' answered Colledge, who had not yet recovered his breath, but who was working hard, I could see, to regain his late air of vivacity, though he was pale, and shot several uneasy glances around him as he spoke.

'I would rather not look,' said Miss Temple ; 'it will make me dream.'

'You will have nothing to talk about, then,' said Colledge.

'It is the most natural object in the world,' exclaimed the lieutenant : 'if he could be stuffed, preserving the posture he is in, and exhibited in London, thousands would assemble to view him.'

I left them to persuade Miss Temple if they could, and walking aft, opened the door and peeped in. It was just a plain, immensely strong, roughly furnished deck-erection, with a small hatch close against the entrance, conducting, as I supposed, to the cabin beneath. On either side went a row of lockers : in the centre was a short narrow table, supported by stanchions ; and at this table sat the figure of a man. He was in an attitude of writing : his right hand grasped a long feather pen ; his left elbow

was on the table, and his cheek was supported by his hand. He was dressed in white jean breeches, the ends of which were stuffed into a pair of yellow leather half-boots. There was a large belt round his waist, clasped by some ornament resembling a two-headed eagle, of a shining metal, probably silver. His shirt was a pale red flannel, over which was a jacket cut in the Spanish fashion; his hair was long, and flowed in black ringlets upon his back. His hat was a large sombrero, and I had to walk to abreast of him to see his face. I was prepared to witness a ghastly sight. Instead, I beheld a countenance of singular beauty. It was as if the hand of death had moulded some faultless human countenance out of white wax. The lids of the eyes drooped, and the gaze seemed rooted upon the table, as though the man lay rapt and motionless in some sweet and perfect dream. His small moustache was like a touch of delicate pencilling. He looked to have been a person of some three or four and twenty years of age.

As I stood surveying the figure, the interior was shadowed. Miss Temple and the others stood in the doorway. The lieutenant and Colledge entered; the girl would not approach.

'Here, Miss Temple,' said I, 'is the handsomest man I have ever seen.'

'Can he be dead?' exclaimed Colledge in a subdued voice of awe.

'He'll never be deader,' said the lieutenant, peering curiously into the face of the corpse.—'Handsome do you consider him, sir? Well, we all have our tastes, to be sure. He looks like a woman masquerading.'

'Who was he, I wonder?' asked Miss Temple in a low tone, standing in a half-shrinking attitude at the door.

'Very hard to say,' said I. 'Too young for the captain, I should think. Probably the mate.'

'A pirate, anyway,' said the lieutenant.

'Hark!' cried Miss Temple; 'this ship is tolling his knell.'

The mellow chime floated past the ear. The effect was extraordinary, so clear was the note as it rang through the soft sounds of the writhing waters; so ghostly, wild, and unreal, too, the character it gathered from the presence of that silent, stirless peman.

'I say, we've seen enough of him, I think,' exclaimed Colledge.

'Shall we bury him?' said I.

'Oh no, sir,' exclaimed the lieutenant; 'this sheer hulk is his coffin. Leave the dead to bury their dead.—Now for a glimpse of the cabin.'

Miss Temple entered with some reluctance; the lieutenant handed her through the hatch down the short ladder, and Colledge and I followed. We found ourselves in a moderately-sized stateroom of the width of the little vessel, with bulkheads at either end, each containing a couple of cabins. There was a small skylight overhead, all the glass of it shattered, but light enough fell through to enable us to see easily. Colledge had plucked up heart, and now bustled about somewhat manfully, opening the cabin doors, starting as if he saw horrible sights, cracking jokes as in the boat, and calling to Miss Temple to look here and look there, and so on.

'Hallo!' cried the lieutenant, putting his head into one of the cabins at the fore-end of the stateroom; 'I missed this room when I overhauled her. What have we here? A pantry is it, or a larder?'

I looked over his shoulder, and by the faint light sifting through the bull's-eye in the deck, made out the contents of what was apparently a storeroom. There were several shelves containing crockery, cheeses, hams, and other articles of food. Under the lower shelf, heaped upon the deck, were stowed several dozens of bottles in straw.

'The corsairs,' said the lieutenant, 'will always be memorable for the excellence of their tipple. What is this, now?'

He picked up a bottle, knocked off the head, and taking a little tin drinking-vessel from a shelf, half filled it, then smelled, and tasted.

'An exquisite Burgundy,' he cried.—'Try it, Mr Dugdale.'

It was indeed a very choice sound wine. The lieutenant half filled a pannikin for Colledge, who emptied it with a sigh of enjoyment. 'What would my father give for such stuff as this!' said he.

The lieutenant found a wine-glass, which he carefully cleansed with the liquor, and then filling it, he asked Miss Temple to drink to the confusion of all pirates. She laughed, and declined.

'Oh, you must sip it, if you please,' cried Colledge, 'if only to heighten the romance of this adventure. Think of the additional colour your story will get out of this incident of drinking perdition to the corsairs in wine of their own!'

She was about to answer, when the hull rolled heavily. The lieutenant slipped; the wine-glass fell to the deck, and was shivered; Colledge, grasping me to steady himself, threw me off my balance, and the pair of us went rolling to the bottles. The young fellow scrambled on to his legs with a loud laugh.

'I believe this vessel is tipsy,' said he.

'Do you mark the increase in the weight of the swell?' I exclaimed as I regained my legs.

The roll of the vessel the other way had been severe, and now she was dipping her sides regularly with an oscillation extravagant enough to render standing very inconvenient.

'We must be off, I think,' said the lieutenant.

'Miss Temple hasn't drunk confusion to the pirates,' exclaimed Colledge with the persistency of brains flushed with wine.

'I would rather not do so,' she answered, her fine face looking curiously pale in that dull light, whilst she glanced restlessly towards the state cabin. She pulled out a little watch. 'It is certainly time to return to the Indiaman,' she added.

'Oh, but don't let us leave all this noble drink to go down to the bottom of the sea,' cried Colledge. 'Is there nothing that we can pack some of the bottles in? If we could only manage to get away with a couple of dozen—twelve for ourselves, and twelve for my cousin?—and with red face and bright eyes he went staggering with the heave of the hull to the shelves and stood holding on, looking about him.

'It might be managed, I think,' said the

lieutenant, who seemed all anxiety to oblige him.

'I wish to be gone,' exclaimed Miss Temple with a strong hint of the imperiousness that had been familiar to me in the Indianaman in the air with which she looked at and addressed the lieutenant. 'What is the meaning of this increased rolling? I shall not be able to enter the boat.'

'No fear of that, madam,' answered the lieutenant; 'a dismasted egg-shell like this will roll to the weakest heave. A trifle more swell has certainly set in, but it is nothing.'

I was not so sure of that. What he was pleased to describe as a trifling increase was to my mind, and very distinctly too, a heightening and broadening of the undulations, of which the significance was rendered strong by the suddenness of the thing. It meant wind close at hand, I could swear.

'I'll go on deck and see how things are,' said I.

'Take me with you, Mr Dugdale,' exclaimed Miss Temple.

'You will suffer me to assist you?' said the lieutenant.

'Oh, I say, don't leave all this wine here,' cried Colledge. 'Mr—I mean, Lieutenant—upon my word, I must apologise for not having asked your name—can't we manage to find some old basket?—'

'What is that down in the corner there, Mr Colledge?' said the lieutenant, laughing.

'Pray, take me on deck, Mr Dugdale?'—exclaimed Miss Temple haughtily and with temper, and she came to my side and passed her arm through mine.

The swaying of the light hull without top-hamer to steady her so hindered one's movements by the staggering lurches it flung one into, that it cost me no small effort to steer a fair course, with Miss Temple hanging to me, to the cabin steps. I helped her up the ladder, and felt in her arm the shudder that swept through her as she sent a single swift glance at the dead figure at the table.

The moment I emerged I cried out: 'My God! see there! Why, if we are not quick!'— And putting my head into the doorway again, I roared down the hatch: 'I say, come on deck, or we shall lose both ships!'

Indeed, all away in the north-west was a white blankness of vapour bearing right down upon the hull, with a long and heavy swell rolling out of it, the heads of which as they came washing from under the base of the thickness were dark with wind. The sky overhead was of a sort of watery ashen colour, going down to the eastern sea-line in a weak, dim blue, so obscure with the complexion of the approaching vaporous mass that the corvette on the left hand and the Indianaman on the right appeared as little more than pallid smudges, with a kind of looming out of their dull, distorted proportions that made them show as though they hung upon the very verge of the ocean. I told Miss Temple to hold to the side of the deck-house to steady herself, and rushed to the quarter. The cutter lay there to the scope of her painter, rising and falling in a manner bewildering to see to one who knew that she had to be entered from these perilously

sloping decks. The moment my head was seen, one of the sailors bawled out: 'The Indianaman's fired two guns, sir.'

'Why, then,' I shouted in a passion, 'didn't one of you jump aboard to report what was coming? —Haul alongside, for God's sake.'

At this moment the lieutenant appeared, followed by Colledge. He took one look, and came in a bound to the sheer edge of the deck, where the remains of the line of crushed bulwarks stood like fangs. 'Lively now!' he cried; 'hand over hand with it.'

'We shall be smothered out of sight in a few minutes,' I exclaimed; 'shall we be acting wisely in quitting this hull? We may lose both ships in that weather there, and what will there be to do then?'

'Don't frighten the lady, sir,' he answered, turning upon me with a frown.—'Miss Temple, there is nothing to be alarmed at. We shall get you into the boat simply enough, and the vapour will speedily clear. I know these waters.'

Colledge stood gazing round him, looking horribly frightened. The boat was dragged alongside: one moment she was above the level of the naked edge of the deck; the next she was sliding away out of sight into the hollow, with the wreck rolling heavily off from her.

'Now, Miss Temple,' cried the lieutenant.—'Help me to steady the lady, Mr Dugdale.—Stand by, two of you men there, to receive her.'

Miss Temple set her lips, and her eyes were on fire with anger and fear. 'I shall not be able to enter that boat,' said she.

'Oh, madam, be persuaded,' cried the lieutenant, speaking irritably out of his clear perception of the danger of delay and of the peril of passing her into the cutter.—'Mr Dugdale, take Miss Temple's arm.'

She shrank back, with a firmer grip of the deck-house, against which she had set her shoulder to steady herself. 'You will kill me!' she cried.

'Mr Dugdale,' exclaimed the lieutenant wildly, 'for God's sake, jump into the boat, that Miss Temple may see how easily it is to be done. I must be the last to leave.'

'Let Mr Colledge jump first,' said I. 'I may probably be more useful to you and the lady than he.'

'Jump, Mr Colledge!' cried the lieutenant.

The young fellow went to the edge of the deck. 'I shall break my neck,' he shouted; 'I shall fall into the sea; I shall be drowned.'

'No, sir! no, sir!' roared one of the seamen; 'jump as the boat lifts; we'll catch you.'

'Now!' cried the lieutenant.

Colledge sprang; down sank the boat out of sight; then up she soared again with Colledge safe in the embrace of one of the most powerful of the sailors.

'Here it comes!' said I.

As the words left my lips, the wind, with a long fierce howl, swept over the deck of the hull, and a moment later the fog was boiling all about us. It was like a mighty burst of steam; and in a breath the ocean vanished, and there was nothing to see but the wool-white blankness and a space of thirty or forty feet of water beyond the wreck. All on a sudden, the lieutenant, who had gone to the edge of the deck, perhaps, to

see how it was with Colledge, or to bawl some further directions to the seamen, staggered to a deep and swinging heel of the hull and went overboard. It happened in a second. My instant impression was that he had jumped for the boat ; but I knew better when I heard the men roaring out.

'Miss Temple,' I cried, 'keep a firm hold, and do not attempt to stir, or the angle of the decks will certainly rush you over the side.'

So saying, I staggered to the quarter where there were some eight or ten feet of bulwarks still standing, and looked over. The men had let go the painter of their boat, and were shouting instructions to one another as some of them flung their oars over into the rowlocks, whilst others overhung the gunwale eagerly with pale faces and looks of consternation and dread, searching the round volumes of the swell, which the wind was now whipping into yeast, for any signs of their officer.

'Keep alongside !' I bellowed ; 'he will rise near.'

But the fellows were distracted, unnerved, and there was nobody to give them orders. The howling of the wind, the sudden leaping down upon them of this blindness of white vapour, the violent upheavals and sinkings of the cutter upon the run of the liquid hills, heavily increased the distraction raised in them by their lieutenant's disappearance. They had three oars out, possessed, I suppose, by some mad fancy of merely paddling whilst they stared round the water ; and even whilst I watched them, and whilst I yelled to them to get their six oars over, and to pull for their lives to alongside the wreck, the boat, yielding to the full weight of the blast and to the long irresistible heavings of the swell, faded out of sight in the flying thickness ; and ere I could fully realise what had occurred, the narrow space of foam-freckled pouring waters showed blank to where the flying vapour seemed to hang like a wall of white smoke.

I continued to stare, occasionally bringing my eyes away from the spot where the boat had vanished to the water alongside ; but the lieutenant had sunk. There could be no doubt that the poor fellow on rising from his first dive had struck the bends of the hull as she rolled heavily over to the trough where he had vanished, and so had been drowned, struck down again into the depths, to rise no more. I could not realise the truth. I felt as if I had fallen crazy, and was imagining dreadful horrors. It was but a minute or two before that he had turned to me with a frown—it was but a little while before that he was full of jokes and laughter in the cabin—and now he lay a dead man, sinking and yet sinking under our heaving and plunging keel, dead as the figure yonder in that little cabin, of whom he had spoken jestingly so lately that the words and tone of his voice were still in my ear !

'Where is the boat, Mr Dugdale ?'

I turned slowly round and looked at the girl with an air of stupefaction, then stared again into the blankness, and with shuddering heart swept my eyes over the water alongside, brimming in hump-backed rounds to the very line of the deck, and sweeping away into the near

thickness with a spitting and seething and flashing of foam off each long slant to the fierce shrill smiting of the wind.

'Has the boat left us, Mr Dugdale ?'

With a desperate effort I rallied myself, and watching for my chances betwixt the wild sloping of the deck, I reached the deck-house, and held on by the girl's side.

'The boat has been blown away. The men fell imbecile, I do believe, when they saw their officer drop overboard. What madmen to let go the painter, to manoeuvre with three oars in a heavy cutter in the teeth of such a wind as this, and on the top of that swell !'

'Did they recover the lieutenant ?' she asked.

'No.'

'Oh, Mr Dugdale,' she shrieked, 'do you tell me he is drowned ?'

'Yes—yes—he is drowned,' I answered, scarce able to articulate for the sudden fit of horror that came upon me again.

'Drowned !' she exclaimed. 'Oh no—not so suddenly ! He may be struggling close against the vessel now—she moved as if to go to the side to look. I grasped her arm.

'Do not stir,' I cried ; 'the slope of the deck will carry you overboard. It is all open to the water abreast of us.'

'Shocking ! It is, unendurable ! Drowned so swiftly ! And the boat—the boat, Mr Dugdale ?'

The cruel distress in her voice, the anguish of mind expressed in her parted lips, her heaving breast, her strained, brilliant, wide-open staring looks about her, rallied me, by forcing me to understand my obligations as a man.

'Miss Temple, this fog may prove but a passing thickness. There is a clear sky over it, and when the vapour settles away, the sea will open to its confines. The Indianan knows we are here. We were watched, too, from the corvette, no doubt, and she must regain her boat besides. The cutter is a powerful little fabric, and there is nothing as yet in this weather or in that sea to hurt her. It is a hard experience for you ; but it will prove a brief one only, I am sure. Let me assist you to a seat in this deck-house. Your having to hold on here is fatiguing and dangerous.'

'I could not enter whilst that man is there,' she exclaimed.—'Oh, hark to that bell !' she cried hysterically ; 'it is tolling for us now !'

'You must be sheltered,' I exclaimed ; 'and that body must come out of it. Will you sit on the deck ? You will be safer so.'

She sank down ; and to still further secure her, I went sidling and clawing like a monkey to the quarter, where, with my knife, I severed an end of rope—a piece of gear belayed to a pin—with which I returned to her side. I passed the line round her waist, and firmly attached the ends to one of several iron uprights which supported the structure ; and, begging her to compose her mind, and not to doubt of our deliverance within the next two or three hours, I entered the little building.

It was a loathsome job ; but the girl must be sheltered, and it was not to be borne that she should have such a companion as that corpse, when there was the great graveyard of the sea within an easy drag to receive the body.

Yet I must own to coming to a stand with a long look at the silent figure before I could muster up stomach enough to lay hands upon him. Indeed, as I now fixed my eyes on the body, I wondered whether he could be really dead, so startlingly lifelike was his posture, so pensive his air, so vital the aspect of him to the minutest feature, down to the pen betwixt his fingers, and the reposeful position of his small wax-white hand upon the table. How could I tell but that he might be in some sort of trance, and that my heaving him overboard would be the same as murdering him? However, after a spell of staring, I shook off these alarms and conjectures, and grasping him by the arm, got him upon the deck; and presently I had him abreast of that part of the brig's side where the bulwarks were gone; and trembling as violently as though I were about to drown a living being, I waited for a roll of the hull, then gave the body a heave, and away it went, striking the swell in a diving attitude, and floating off and down into it, as if it swam.

This done, I crept back to Miss Temple and squatted beside her.

#### INDIAN LATHE AND LAC WORK.

MANY of our readers must have seen in the Indian part of the late Colonial Exhibition a number of wooden articles of a very miscellaneous description, on which sealing-wax or *lac* took the place of paint or varnish. The surface is almost perfectly level; yet it consists of elaborate designs, mostly mottled in various colours. All these colours seem put on, not in bands or large patches, which would be comparatively an easy task, but in small dots and specks and spots. The wonder is how it is all done.

The lac-worker prepares beforehand a number of sticks of sealing-wax, in a very rough form, according to the number of colours which he intends to put into his design. The articles he intends to coat—walking-sticks, rods, round-rulers, little boxes, bowls, cups, saucers, legs for tables, chairs and bedsteads, balls and globes, and such-like—are ready to hand, carefully turned to a round or cylindrical form, with such mouldings and groovings as he intends. They have been either turned by himself, or been done by others, with the primitive but very effective lathe which we now proceed to describe, and which is used both for ordinary turning and for the process of putting on lac.

Like all native Indian workmen, the Indian turner and lac-worker squats on the earth, resting on his seat. His legs are extended before him, bent at the knees, with feet and toes bare. From long practice he uses his toes very deftly to aid his hands and fingers. To his left, and well in front, he drives into the earth a wooden peg, the head of which remains a few inches above the ground. At right angles to this is fixed—looking to the right—a horizontal iron spike. Against this he applies, also horizontally and to the right, a piece of wood, carrying a little

pulley (round which he gives one turn of a long piece of thickish twine or catgut), and, a little further on, a simple *chuck*, or contrivance for holding the object he intends to turn or to work upon. Having fitted, in the chuck, one end of this object—say the turned leg of a chair—he places against its opposite end a small iron spike, projecting leftwards and horizontally, from another wooden peg similar to the peg already driven into the earth on his left. This second peg is driven into the earth like the first till the two iron spikes are on a level. Alongside of this last peg, and to its own right, he drives in another and larger peg to steady the former. A wedge driven carefully between these two pegs holds the chuck and article to be worked quite steady and level between the two iron spikes in the pegs. The ends of the twine round the pulley are now tied to the two ends of a bow about four feet long; and the twine is drawn so tight that by holding one end of the bow in his left hand and moving it forwards and backwards, the chuck and the article in it are rapidly whirled round by means of the twine round the pulley. When he pushes the bow forward, the revolutions are made from him, but towards him when he draws the bow backwards.

A few such movements enable him to adjust the chuck and object with perfect accuracy of axis, by a few judicious touches of his mallet to either right or left peg, or the wedge which regulates the pressure of the two iron spikes aforesaid. This is his lathe. His tools consist of a small number of common chisels and a compass. It is marvellous with what few and simple instruments the native Indian artisan produces his elaborate and wonderful work.

If he is going to turn rough wood, his left hand first pushes forward his bow as far as possible, then, while vigorously drawing it back, he applies a chisel to the wood, holding its handle in his hand, while he steadies and directs the point or edge of the chisel with the two great toes of his feet. Again, the bow is pushed forward, the chisel during this reverse movement being removed a little from the wood, and being once more applied to it, with the requisite pressure, when the bow is drawn backwards again. The compass, of course, is used to ascertain the correctness of size required in each part.

If, however, the operation is to lac the already turned article, the duty of the left hand is still the same, that of working at the bow—as above described—to make the article revolve rapidly on its axis. But in his right hand, instead of a chisel, the operator takes one of the sticks of lac—of any colour he pleases—and this he applies to the surface of the revolving article. He passes it rapidly from one end to the other with an equal pressure at all points. The friction dissolves the lac, and smears the whole surface with a thin coating of the substance. While the article still revolves, a ‘cushion’ of a rag of cotton cloth is applied with the right hand to the surface, to make it quite smooth. A stick of lac of a second colour is then used; a second layer of lac is deposited, completely hiding the first; and this second surface is smoothed as above with a

cotton-rag cushion. And so a third and a fourth layer are successively overlaid on the other two.

Three layers are ordinary work; four are common; but five and even six are by no means rare. Each layer is extremely thin in itself, but perfectly level all over; and all of them together do not exceed the thickness of ordinary cream-laid letter-paper. It is quite enough to state this for our readers to understand that it requires a delicate touch, acquired only by great practice, to place such uniform and delicate films one over another, perfectly equal all over, whether the wood is turned quite even, or has been worked in grooves and mouldings.

If the article is meant to be of one uniform colour, only one stick of lac is used; and the cushion having equalised and polished its surface, it is released from the chuck; the whole being the simple and easy work of a couple of minutes for each thing. A second replaces the first in the chuck; and so on. But if variety is needed, as many colours as are required in the pattern must be laid on, one after another, before the work of producing the design is begun.

To produce these speckled designs a small sharp and short chisel is used with the right hand and the two feet. The left still continues to make the article revolve, as before, with the bow and twine, but with a slower movement. The pressure on the chisel is regulated with the extreme of nicety, so as to penetrate one, two, three, or more coats of the lac, according to the colour which is wanted to be produced on each particular spot. A hair's thickness too much or too little, and the wrong coat or colour would appear. It is better to err with too little pressure, as this can be rectified at the next revolution, than with too much pressure, which cuts down to the wrong colour, leaving none of the right kind to replace it. If the latter mistake is made to any important extent, the whole of the coats must be removed with sand-paper and put on once more. But practice makes this quite an uncommon accident. Generally speaking, the well-trained hand and toes guide with perfect accuracy the point of the chisel to the exact depth needed at each touch. Colour after colour appears in the design, till the whole surface of the article has reached the stage where the lathe is no longer of any use in working out the design. The article is now released from the chuck, for other designs have to be put on it in straight lines, compartments, or flower-patterns. These can be done only by hand, and not lathe-work. The article, then in its mottled state, or, if the mottled appearance is not desired, with only one homogeneous coating still covering the successive layers of lac, is held in the left hand. The operator still squats on the ground, merely drawing his legs under him in tailor fashion. With the right hand he engraves the required designs, through one or more layers of lac, till the required colour appears in each place, of the exact shape and size that the pattern requires. We have seen patterns thus wrought, with green leaves and flowers (red, blue, pink, yellow, and white intermingled) arranged in geometrical panels, with equal pains and skill.

For all this elaborate engraving through the successive coats of lac, the only instruments used

by the native Indian artisan are a sharp penknife with a long and thin blade, a knitting-needle ground to a point, and a few needles stuck in a rude wooden handle.

Rude and simple and rough as the whole apparatus doubtless is, it has some merits of its own. To begin with, it is extremely portable; for it can be carried, with all its parts and belongings, in an ordinary workman's bag: this in India is generally a wallet made of coarse cotton cloth or canvas, and is slung workman-like over the shoulder. The workshop is generally the shade of a large tree or of a high wall; and the situation is changed a couple of times in the day, as the sun goes round.

The elaborate lathes of the West are to these Indians complicated machines, too unwieldy for use, and they despise them just in proportion as they consider their own simpler contrivances to be the pink of perfection. We had a very ludicrous instance of this notion once, most bluntly expressed. We had a friend, an officer of high standing in the medical service, who was an accomplished turner, and had a beautiful lathe, completely furnished with all the requirements of such a machine, set up in a room of his house at Ferozepore in the Punjab. For lathe-work he had a real passion. In one of our many excursions, we took him to see the process of lac-work which we have described. As he expressed a wish to learn the process, we arranged with the Indian workman to come for a couple of days to Ferozepore, and work before the doctor's eyes, and to superintend and direct his first efforts at lac-work, which he had determined to learn. He came accordingly, and planting his portable lathe under a tree, he turned and proceeded to lac several articles. He was then taken into the room and shown the Western lathe, we acting as interpreter. He first stared with all his eyes; and then he asked a thousand questions; but he prudently reserved any positive expression of his opinion regarding it till he had seen it work. All he said was, 'Wah! wah! jee' (Grand! grand! sir.)

Then our friend adjusted a cylinder of wood in his lathe and began his first attempt at lac-work. As he was really a first-rate worker, his maiden effort was by no means unsuccessful; and layer after layer of lac was laid on fairly well, though, of course, neither so easily nor with the thinness and nicety which nothing but practice can impart. The Indian watched the work attentively, giving a little aid with directions or suggestions, and repeating frequently his 'Wah! wah! jee' (Bravo! sir). But when our friend took up the chisel to scratch, through the various layers of lac, something like a design, the result was woful: the underlying wood appeared at almost every touch, and only irregular blotches of lac were left here and there on the surface! The officer put down his chisel, and we all three had a hearty laugh at his by no means unexpected failure. As he was about to begin a second trial, the Indian said: 'Sir, if you really want to succeed in making lac-work, that thing is of no use at all! Take off your shoes and come and sit down at my lathe! That is a lathe indeed; and one capable of turning out any work you please. And it is cheap, too, for it only cost me a rupee and a half!'—a sum equal then

to two shillings and ninepence, but now only to a florin. And though he often came to see our friend at work, yet he continued to believe in the superiority of his own lathe.

Our friend, we may add, persevered in his attempts, but used his own lathe and his hands without aid from his toes. Ten years passed since that first attempt before we met again. It was at his residence in London, and there we again saw him at work at that identical lathe which the Indian had so contemptuously slighted ; and we found him engaged in turning out Indian lac-work with ease and success.

#### A STRANGE DESTINY.

I DIED seventeen years ago, and though my form is scarcely ethereal, I am as effectively non-existent as if I had been comfortably ferried over Styx and slumbered ten feet below the earth's surface. It will be necessary for me to explain that my name is, or was, Charles Conyngham, and my vocation that of Continental messenger of Her Majesty's Foreign Office. In so remarkable a manner I disappeared that in all probability the Secretarial department at Downing Street, in conjunction with their neighbours over the way at Great Scotland Yard, still regard it as an unsolved mystery. In vain may they search, for I have ceased to exist ; my personality has been lost for the past seventeen years.

Some may ask the reason I vanished ; to such I would promptly reply that I did so involuntarily, and in a manner in which very few have done. It was my chief duty to carry despatches to the east of Europe ; and so constantly did I travel between London and Brindisi, Trieste, Marseilles, and Constantinople, that my long tedious journeys became irksome, and I yearned for rest and quiet. My position was one of great responsibility, for I carried, hidden from view in a pouch around my waist, sealed packets containing state secrets of every conceivable nature, and messages intended only for the eye of ambassadors, which, if made public, might seriously interfere with the prestige of the nation, or even involve us in war.

In 1871, England was obliged to exercise some ingenious diplomacy towards the newly-formed French Republic ; and consequently in the middle of the year I was making two and even three journeys to Paris each week. Constant travelling like this soon wearies the most experienced, especially when arriving in London in the morning, only to return at night. The French, German, and Italian railways were to me as familiar as the Strand or Regent Street, for in ten years of Continent-trotting my brain had become a Bradshaw in itself, and I think I had seen all the so-called 'sights,' so delightful to the untravelled. A long journey to the Austrian or Turkish capital was very much more to my taste than the wearying monotony of 'the Dover-Calais route,' and I began to be heartily sick of it, as during the month I had been to Paris no less than thirteen times.

One August night, though excessively tired, I was compelled to set out again, and left Charing Cross by the mail-train. Besides carrying im-

portant despatches, a bag had been entrusted to my care which I knew contained a large sum in gold and notes, and which I had instructions to deliver to the British ambassador. I was alone as far as Dover ; but when I alighted on the pier the wind was blowing hard and the rain descending in torrents, indicative of 'dirty' weather outside the harbour.

'Calais boat this way, sir !' The words sounded above the disconsolate comments in English, and the staccato sounds in objurgatory French, so I traversed the wet gangway, and soon had my precious bag placed in a position in the saloon where I could keep a watchful eye upon it.

Arriving at Calais soon after midnight, I entered the refreshment room and made a hearty meal, until the unwelcome words 'En voiture pour Paris' were shouted. Then I went out, and selecting an empty first-class compartment, bade the porter deposit the bag, and wrapping myself comfortably in my travelling rug, settled down for the remainder of the journey.

I dared not sleep whilst this quantity of gold was in my possession, and fatigued as I was, I managed, by dint of great effort, to keep myself awake. It was always possible I might be watched and followed by thieves or emissaries of political societies ; therefore, a loaded revolver reposed in my pocket ready for any emergency.

Few people were travelling that night, and I was fortunate enough to have the compartment to myself until we ran into Abbeville. Then there entered two well-dressed Frenchmen, who scrutinised me rather closely and sank into the opposite corners of the carriage. Seldom I feel uneasy about my fellow-passengers ; but I confess that, as I regarded them, a shadow of distrust, of impending evil fell upon me. Instinctively I felt for my revolver, and assured myself it was in readiness if required, for somehow I was certain these men had been upon the Channel boat, and were following me with an evil purpose.

But they sat opposite one another smoking, and occasionally indulging in conversation, though never once turning towards me, and keeping their faces concealed as much as possible from the pale flickering ray of the carriage-lamp.

As the train sped on, I became more fully convinced these men meant mischief. I looked at my watch, and found that in twenty minutes we should be due at Amiens, and determined to change into another carriage there. Patiently I sat gazing out of the window, watching the first gray streak of dawn break over the distant hills, and waiting for the next stoppage, when I suddenly felt a terrible blow upon the top of my skull.

I remember no more ! All was blank !

A burning excruciating pain like the pricking of a thousand red-hot needles in my brain, a feeling that my eyes were being gouged out and my temples beaten with hot irons. It was the most horrible torment I have ever experienced, yet I was gradually coming to, struggling out of what seemed to be a half-dream, half-stupor. Slowly the terrible throbbing in my head abated, and I found myself seated in an armchair in a handsomely furnished though unfamiliar drawing-room. It was dimly lit by tiny electric lamps,

and gazing round in astonishment, I noticed a spacious fernery beyond, which looked like a mermaid's cave in the depths of the sea, so dense was the mass of greenery and so soft the plash of the miniature cascade.

My first thought was of my despatches, and I felt for my pouch; but it was not there! Had I been robbed? Placing my hand on my chin, I was startled to find that I had a long beard plentifully besprinkled with gray, though yesterday I was cleanly shaven! And my bag of coin, where was that? I struggled to my feet, and as I did so, my figure was reflected in a long mirror. I staggered backwards in amazement; for last night I was a sprightly young man of thirty; but I now saw my hair was thin and gray, and my face so wrinkled and altered that I could not recognise it as my own.

Where was I? What could it all mean? Whilst these thoughts were passing through my mind, I espied a bell-handle, and tugged it. My summons was quickly answered by a sharp-featured young man, who was evidently not a servant.

'Tell me who brought me here? Whose house is this?' I asked impatiently.

The man gazed at me apparently in blank astonishment. 'I—er. You're not well, sir, I think. This is your own house.'

'My house! And who are you, pray?'

'I am your secretary; but I—I'll return in a moment,' he replied, and evidently much terrified, he disappeared as quickly as if he had seen a phantom.

I had no time to reflect upon the mystery of the situation before there entered a tall voluptuous-looking woman, of what is called the Junoesque type, in evening dress, and ablaze with diamonds. She was decidedly handsome, her dark beauty altogether striking.

'Why, what have you said to Hallett? You've quite frightened him,' she said, laughing. 'How is it you are not dressed? You remember we promised to dine at Creswell's to-night.'

'I—I don't understand you, madam,' I gasped, for my brain was in a whirl.

'What's the matter with you? What has happened?' she cried in alarm. 'Don't you know me, Rose, your wife?'

'My wife! No; I have never seen you before. This is some trick.—Where is my bag of money?' I said in perplexity.

The look of distress deepened as she said: 'Calm yourself, my dear. You are not well, and must have advice.'

'I want no advice,' I replied. 'I must resume my journey to Paris at once. Where are the clothes I wore, and the despatches?'

'I do not know what you mean,' exclaimed the woman who called herself my wife. 'Your mind must be wandering, Frank.'

'That is not my name. I am Charles Conyngham.'

'No; you are under a delusion, dear,' she replied in a softer tone, evidently intending to humour me. 'You are Frank Thorndyke, and I am Rose Thorndyke, your wife.'

'When and where did you marry me?'

'In Melbourne, eight years ago.'

'In Melbourne! And where are we now?'

'This is our country-house at St Kilda, in

Victoria.—Is there anything else you would like to know?' She said this with a smile, as if half inclined to believe I was joking.

The surging crowd of thoughts and feelings which burst upon my brain I cannot describe. Was I still myself, or was it all a dream? No; it was a stern reality.

'I married you eight years ago, you say. Then what year is this?'

She laughed mischievously as she replied: 'Come, Frank; this is not the 1st of April, so all this fooling is out of place. You know well enough it is 1888.'

'What!' I cried, feeling myself growing rigid with amazement. 'Yesterday was seventeen years ago!'

I was certainly wide awake and sensible; but that I was myself I began to doubt, and at last came to the conclusion I was not. I struggled to comprehend the situation, but utterly failed. How I came to be in Australia, the husband of such a wife, the owner of such a mansion, was a deep inexplicable mystery. I felt light-headed, for this horrible suspense was goading me into frenzy.

'There must be some serious misunderstanding between us, madam,' I said earnestly. 'I am not joking; for I certainly have never set eyes upon you before this evening, and am utterly at a loss to know who or what I am.'

The woman who called me husband regarded me with a look of terror, as if she had suddenly become convinced of the truth of my words. Her face blanched, and she would have fallen, had I not caught her and laid her upon a sofa. I rang the bell, and a maid-servant appeared.

'Your mistress has fainted; call some one to her assistance,' I said, and leaving the room, proceeded to explore the house from garret to basement. It was a splendid modern mansion, furnished with taste and elegance; and I found, on looking out of the windows, it was surrounded by well-kept lawns and clumps of fine old trees, now illuminated by the pale moonlight, and transformed into a scene almost fairy-like.

Presently I was pacing the terrace, rapt in thought. The stars shone, the night-wind sighed softly through the trees, and the air was filled with the subtle perfume of roses. How well I remember leaning upon the stone balustrade, gazing away to where the lurid reflection upon the sky denoted the distant city of Melbourne, and trying to account for my novel surroundings.

Utterly unable to realise the memorable journey to Paris had been made seventeen years before, for it seemed but yesterday, though my aged appearance, my beard, the fact of my marriage, and my opulence, all combined to confirm the assertion the fainting woman had just made. But the thought of the lost money and undelivered despatches troubled me most. In vain I tried to recount my actions on that night I left London; but beyond the remembrance of the terrible blow I had sustained, I could recollect nothing. The anxiety was distracting; and as I paced the terrace with quick impatient steps, I knew that if some solution of this horrible mystery did not soon present itself, I should go mad. I had a presentiment of insanity, and shuddered at the thought of the terrible derangement which hung over me as a Damoclean sword.

Suddenly I heard a footstep, and turning, confronted the man who called himself my secretary.

'Layton, the manager of the Waljeers, has just arrived from Ballarat, and wishes to see you on important business, sir,' he said.

'To see me! What for?'

'He desires instructions regarding the Waljeers claim. They have struck the Lead at last, and the yield of gold is so rich that he advises you to float it as a company in the Melbourne market at once. Shall I bring him to you?'

'No,' I replied. 'Leave me to myself. I—I have not the slightest idea of your meaning.'

'You must be unwell, sir,' the man replied. 'Surely you know Layton, who used to manage your mine at Poowong, and who is now in charge of the Waljeers?'

'I don't know him, and I have no desire to make his acquaintance. Send him away,' I said.

For a moment the man hesitated, then muttering in an undertone, retired into the house.

When alone, I again strove to give my thoughts definite shape, for somehow everything seemed hazy and indistinct, and my agony of mind was indescribable.

It was not long before a maid-servant appeared, saying: 'Mistress would like to see you in the drawing-room, sir;' and I obeyed the summons.

On entering, I found the woman who called me husband seated upon a low lounge-chair, and near her stood a short stout old gentleman in a frock-coat and wearing gold *pince-nez*.

'Ah, my dear Thorndyke,' exclaimed the latter, greeting me effusively; 'how are you this evening?'

'I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance,' I replied.

'Not know me? Come, come, think. Don't you remember Dr Stanborough?'

'No, I don't.'

The woman glanced significantly at him as he advanced towards me peering intently into my eyes.

'What have you been saying to your wife?' he asked abruptly.

'Saying! Why, the truth!' I replied. 'She calls herself my wife; but I have never seen her before. Yesterday, I was conveying some important despatches between London and Paris, when—well, I hardly know what happened; but I believe two ruffians stunned me, and I knew no more until I awoke this evening to find myself in a strange house and claimed as husband by this lady! I believe there's some confounded trickery somewhere, and perhaps you can explain the whereabouts of the despatches and money?'

The doctor did not reply, but turning to her, said gravely: 'Madam, this is very, very sad. I am afraid your husband's mind is affected.'

'You are mistaken,' I cried vehemently. 'I am as sane as yourself; but if this horrible mystery is not soon elucidated, I feel I shall go mad.'

'You are certainly not yourself to-night. We must see what treatment we can give you,' said the doctor.

'I want none of your nostrums, sir. All I require are my despatches and money. I am

told I am in Australia; if so, I must return to England immediately and explain my absence.'

'Doctor, my dear husband seems under the delusion he has been robbed of some important documents,' explained she anxiously.

'I am under no delusion, madam!' I said rather hotly. 'All I desire explained is how I came to be here.'

'Monomania evidently,' the doctor exclaimed in a low voice. 'It develops frequently into the most violent forms of madness, and he will have to be kept in seclusion and closely watched.'

'Understand me,' I said angrily. 'Your fears as to my sanity are groundless. I believe I have fallen a victim to a vile plot; but I tell you I am being mistaken for some other man. I am Charles Conyngham of the Foreign Office, London.'

'Very well, my dear fellow, very well,' the doctor replied, placing his hand upon my shoulder. 'We will believe it—if you wish. Calm yourself; remember your wife is nervous and weak.'

I turned dejectedly away, for all my efforts to make myself understood had only been met with incredulity by the idiotic, soft-spoken old doctor, who evidently believed I was mad.

My position became more singular every moment, and in distraction I strode out into the grounds and plunged into a dark wood of tall gum-trees. On and on I walked, heedless of where my footsteps led me, until at last, tired out, I sank upon a felled trunk and gave myself up to another mental struggle.

All was dead silence, save the weird croaks and screams of the night-birds and the faint rustle of the leaves overhead. The cool wind fanned my heated temples with such a soothing effect that I fell asleep. The morning sun was penetrating the thick foliage when I awoke and made my way out of the forest. Without much difficulty I retraced my steps to the house, only to become more intensely puzzled. My *soi-disant* wife was too unwell to leave her room, and I roamed aimlessly about the place, seeking to discover something—I knew not what.

One room I entered was evidently a study; my own den possibly! Glancing round at the books, the few choice paintings, and the row of telephones, I seated myself at the littered writing-table. Turning over the papers before me and examining them, I saw they related to mining enterprises and transactions involving large sums. Many of the letters and memoranda were unmistakably in my handwriting, but the signatures were 'Frank Thorndyke,' and the letter-paper bore the heading 'Great Poowong Gold Mines, Office 296 Collins Street, Melbourne.' My eyes fell upon a calendar, and I saw I had not been deceived; it was the year 1888!

For some time I sat engrossed in thought. Bewildered with the events of the past few hours, I felt I must make some strenuous effort to solve the enigma, and account for the intervening seventeen years. It was impossible that I had been asleep in the manner of Rip van Winkle, so I must have been existing during that period. But where, and how?

From the doctor's words on the previous night, it seemed clear that if I remained I should be

placed under restraint as a lunatic, so what should hinder me from returning to Europe, and endeavouring to find out what befell me on that midnight journey? At the thought of funds I rose, and searching the drawers of the writing-table, discovered a cash-box. A bunch of keys was in my pocket, one of which opened the box, and eagerly counting the contents, I found nearly three hundred pounds in gold and notes. This would suffice for the journey, and with joy I transferred the money to my pockets.

In haste I wrote a few lines to my mysterious wife, informing her of my intention, begging her not to follow me, and promising to return as soon as I obtained the information required to restore my peace of mind.

Calling Hallett, my secretary, I gave him the letter, with instructions not to deliver it at the sick woman's room until the evening; then gathering a few things into a hand-bag, I left the house. The next train bore me to Melbourne, and that same evening I was on board a P. and O. boat steaming out of Port Phillip.

From the first I was beset by terrible anxiety and fear lest I should be recognised, for, though a victim to circumstances, I was nevertheless a delinquent, and I knew not into whose hands the undelivered despatches had fallen, or what complications had ensued thereby.

On my return to London, however, I soon became assured that my appearance had changed beyond recognition, for on various pretexts I conversed with men who had been my intimate associates, none of whom now claimed my acquaintance.

The task of tracing my past career was fraught with many difficulties, and it was in Paris that I discovered a clue to the mystery. Whilst searching the file of the *Figaro* for 1871, I found that on August 5th the night-mail from Calais to Paris, whilst approaching Amiens, ran into some trucks, and was completely wrecked, seven persons being killed and twenty injured. But there was also enacted a terrible tragedy, for it appeared that in a first-class compartment were two men, one having amongst his baggage a strong leather bag, containing a large sum in English notes and gold. Both received severe blows about the head in the collision; but one, in order to obtain possession of the money, took advantage of the confusion immediately following the accident by shooting his fellow-traveller dead. The murderer was making off with that portion of his booty that was portable, when he was apprehended and conveyed to Paris.

Here was another complication! I could not be the murderer, neither could I be the murdered man, yet the bag of gold referred to was evidently the one entrusted to my care.

Eagerly I scanned the papers of the following days, and found reports of the examination before the *Juge d'Instruction*, and subsequent trial of the accused for wilful murder. He was stated to be young and well dressed, though conducting himself strangely, refusing to give his name or any account of himself whatever, and preserving an immutable silence throughout the many days the proceedings lasted. The trial must have been a celebrated one, judging from the reports; and the prisoner, through a slight discrepancy in the

corroborative evidence, escaped the guillotine, and was sentenced to transportation for life to the penal settlement of New Caledonia.

Here the information ended; and though I searched the copies of the papers for two years subsequently, I found nothing more. It was clear my only hope lay in an interview with this mysterious convict, who might enlighten me as to my connection with the tragic affair; and to this end I sought out an official in the Prisons Department who was once well known to me. He had since retired into private life, and, in common with others, did not remember me. Representing myself as an English solicitor endeavouring to trace a next-of-kin, and offering to pay handsomely for information, I prevailed upon him to seek an interview with the Chief of the Department, and ascertain where the man who had been sent to penal servitude for this particular crime could be found.

A few days later, when I called, a memorandum was placed in my hand certifying that after remaining five years at the settlement, Prisoner No. 7403, committed for life for murder, had escaped, in company with Auguste Durand, another convict, by means of a boat. The supposition was that they were drowned at sea; if not, they must have landed on the Queensland coast.

To discover this man Durand was no easy matter; but if successful, he might furnish me with the whereabouts of his whilom companion. I was dubious about the result of my search, for might I not be on the wrong track after all? Nevertheless, I proceeded to Brisbane without delay, and in nearly all the chief newspapers in the Australian colonies caused to be inserted a brief paragraph to 'Auguste Durand, late of Yengen,' stating that his companion upon the voyage from the island to the mainland in 1876 wished particularly to meet him, as he had something important to communicate. This was the only means by which I could hope to find him, and congratulating myself upon having composed an artfully worded invitation, patiently awaited its result.

Several weeks passed without an answer, and I was vainly trying to devise some other method by which to reach the escaped convict, when one day I was informed by the hotel waiter that a gentleman desired to see me. I naturally concluded it was he, and expressed my willingness to receive my visitor.

Judge my dismay, however, when there was ushered in no less a person than my secretary!

'Well, old fellow,' said he familiarly, offering his hand; 'and why all this confounded mystery?'

I was speechless with amazement.

'I saw the advertisement in the *Argus*,' he continued, 'and concluding something was up, left Melbourne at once. What is it?'

'The advertisement?' I gasped.

'Yes. You want to see me.'

'You are mistaken; I do not.'

'But your advertisement was addressed to Auguste Durand, your humble servant, who shared your lot in that living tomb at Yengen, and who escaped with you!'

'What? Is this true?' I asked in astonishment. 'Was I convicted for murder?'

'Of course you were, and I for forgery. But you seem to be as insane as when you left St Kilda so suddenly six months ago. What's the matter with you?'

'Are you Auguste Durand?' I asked.

'That's my baptismal cognomen, though John Hallett suits me better just now.'

'Then hear me,' I exclaimed. 'Perhaps I am not quite myself, but I have forgotten all. Tell me how we escaped, why I am rich, and you are my servant.'

He gazed at me incredulously for a moment, and after reiterating his opinion that I had taken leave of my senses, related the story of our escape.

Narrated briefly, it seemed we were pals in the same labour gang, and had plotted our escape for many months, until one day, finding a boat in which keg of water and some biscuits had been conveniently placed, we took advantage of the opportunity. After drifting countless days upon the Coral Sea under a burning sun, we landed at last, more dead than alive, near Port Curtis. Overjoyed at our freedom, we at once commenced to seek a livelihood, and at Wallon turned miners. Fortune smiled upon me. I prospered, bought claims, and profited largely by speculation, though my companion, always unlucky, existed upon my charity. After seven years at the diggings, I married a wealthy woman, and removed to Melbourne.

'And what is my present position?' I asked, when he had concluded.

'You are the owner of two of the richest gold mines in Victoria; and I, always a Lazarus, am your confidential secretary. Most confidential,' he added, smiling; 'the master convicted of murder, and the servant of forgery.'

By this narrative the blank in my life had been filled, and I became aware it was myself, the mysterious convict, I had been endeavouring to trace.

Was I a murderer? That I was innocent seemed clear, for it was only reasonable to suppose that after the collision my fellow-travellers attempted to rob me, and that in protecting my charge I fired the fatal shot. Seeing I had killed the thief, and fearing the consequences, I filled my pockets with the money, and was decamping when arrested. Why I refused to give any account of myself at the trial did not seem so obvious; but after much deliberation I became convinced of the fact, by no means unknown in medical science, that in the collision, the terrible blow I had sustained upon the head caused me to lose all consciousness of the past. From that moment I commenced an entirely fresh existence, remembering nothing of what had occurred before, and was therefore unable to tell even my name or nationality at the trial. The Foreign Office were either in ignorance of my position, or refrained from interfering from some unexplained cause; and thus for seventeen years I had lived utterly oblivious to the events anterior to the blow which so strangely affected my brain. On that memorable night in my own drawing-room, I must have struck my head against some hard substance—the corner of the mantel-shelf probably—and this, as a counteraction, restored me to consciousness, though

obliterating the remembrance of the intervening years.

On my return to St Kilda, my wife welcomed me warmly; and after I had explained the cause of my sudden absence and apparent insanity, she went to her room, returning with a sealed official envelope, dirty and crumpled.

'This,' she said, 'you confided to my safe keeping soon after our marriage. Possibly it may be the lost despotic.'

It was! I grasped it eagerly, and read the superscription, then placed it on the fire and watched the flames consume it.

From that day I commenced life afresh, and can safely assert there is not a happier pair than Rose and I in all the colony.

Durand is no longer my secretary, but the keeper of a fashionable restaurant in Melbourne. I need scarcely add it was my money that purchased the business.

#### LEAVES FROM AN OLD ACCOUNT-BOOK.

A BOOK dealing with 'orders on the Exchequer' in the reign of His Majesty King James I. of England would not seem at a first glance likely to afford matter for entertainment to that considerable section of the public which takes but little interest in antiquarian research. James was the son of Mary Queen of Scots; he was the 'most High and Mighty Prince' to whom the compilers of the Authorised Version addressed their elegant but little-read Dedication; and he was the earliest and most vehement denouncer of the Indian weed, which British farmers are now trying to grow. But the pathetic interest which clings to the memory of his mother, his son, and his son's children, is altogether awanting in his own life. He was not beautiful, like Mary; nor surrounded with an air of sanctity (real or fictitious), like the First Charles; nor vicious and charming, like the Second Charles. He was not dethroned, like the Second James; nor was his career adventurous and romantic, like that of the Pretenders. The romance writers who crowd thickly around his mother's grave, and write with brine the tale of the sorrows of his progeny, find little to interest them in James VI. of Scotland and I. of England. Still, a few facts divulged by the old Exchequer records may be of interest regarding this successor of Queen Elizabeth.

And first, as is known to every one, James was distinctly a 'sporting' man. The fact is not alluded to in the Dedication of the divines; but we have it referred to in the issue of a writ or order on the Exchequer for the sum of £16, 13s. 4d. to William Gatacre for 'breeding, feeding, and dieting of cocks of the game for His Highness's recreation.' This charge occurs repeatedly in the records of the Exchequer, and with a frankness of detail which proves that nobody concerned saw anything to be ashamed of in the transaction. Will the day ever come when any items appearing in the estimates of the present time—those, for instance, which relate to

the pursuit of the stag and the fox—will be contemplated with wonder by our descendants? Then the king, it appears, had a favourite hound, which the queen one day, by some misadventure, shot at and killed. Her Majesty was deeply distressed. Now we prove our king to be something vastly different from the mere 'royal pedant.' He bought a diamond at a cost of two thousand pounds—the Exchequer record is our witness—and sent it to his sorrowing spouse 'as a legacy from his dead dog.' Could aught be more knightly, kingly, courteous? Stand down, King Arthur! Thy Guinevere never had from thee a princeling gift.

In 1610 the king was busy superintending the education of his younger son the Duke of York. That young gentleman was doubtless taught many things befitting the rank into which he was born, but we find notices of three subjects only. John Webb is authorised to receive from the Exchequer twenty pounds 'for his attendance in teaching the Duke of York to play tennis now one whole year ended at Michaelmas last' (1610). A further sum of thirty pounds is due to 'Sebastian La Pierre, Frenchman, teacher of dancing to His Majesty's dear son,' and 'John Beauchesney, Frenchman, teacher of the said Duke to sing,' receives the considerable sum of forty pounds for his services. Much money is spent in entertainments, and particularly in that form of spectacle known as the Masque. Inigo Jones, the architect of the era, whose work is visible to us of to-day in many a country mansion, receives two hundred pounds for services in connection with 'the Queen's Masque' in 1610. The embellishment of the royal suite seems to have involved much outlay. On April 10, 1606, 'Giles Simpson, goldsmith,' is paid the sum of £6, 17s. 2d. 'to be by him employed for spangles for the making of coat for James Ros, footman to the Duke of York,' and in July of the same year a much heavier payment (£689, 17s. 7d.) is made to the same enterprising goldsmith for 'fine gold and fine silver' to be used in making spangles for the liveries of the royal servants generally.

We pass from these frivolities to grave matters of state. The striking incident of King James's reign is, of course the Gunpowder Plot. Probably no other event in history is so well known to the schoolboy; we speak not of that extraordinary creation of Lord Macaulay's brain, but of the ordinary schoolboy of fact. The only item of expense directly bearing upon the Plot is a payment of one hundred and twenty pounds to Sir Arthur Throckmorton, for 'the charges and expenses for himself his servants and ministers under him employed in seizing the land and goods of Francis Tressham, Robert Catesby, John Bates, and other traitors, in the most horrible intended treason against His Majesty and the state.' But we fancy that the sixty pounds paid to Lord Stanhope 'for one Bowles, for inspecting certain Jesuits and priests beyond the seas,' has some not very remote connection with the bold and happily unsuccessful undertaking of Guy Fawkes. So, too, perhaps, has the twenty pounds we find remitted to certain messengers 'for their pains and travail in apprehending of divers persons who have spread abroad seditious books against His Majesty and the state.' If the Secret Service Fund records of to-day—

assuming there to be any—are made public in a century or two, it may be that many entries of similar purport to this last will be revealed. There are tricks in every trade, the initiated tell us, and why should not Downing Street have its secrets?

Whatever else King James may have been, he was at least not unmindful of his mother's memory. Repeatedly we find advances made to Cornelius Cure, master-mason, 'parcel of a more sum due to him for the framing, making, erecting, and finishing a tomb' for Mary Queen of Scots. What the 'more sum' really was it would be vain to inquire; but it must have reached well into four figures by the time the last instalment was paid. It is more legitimate to speculate on the destiny of a picture or pictures, being portraits of the King, Queen, and Prince Charles 'in full length and proportion,' painted by John De Crete, Serjeant Painter, for the moderate fee—take note, Portrait-painters of the nineteenth century!—of £53, 6s. 8d. The work was done for presentation to the Archduke of Austria. Perhaps in some dusty gallery of an old Viennese palace the features of King James, his wife, and son are still to be seen by the curious visitor. Or was the canvas presentation of the first two Stuart kings part of the artistic treasure which long afterwards fell into the hands of the Corsican adventurer, only to be again scattered when his star sank, as the star of the Stuarts had sunk already, to rise no more?

#### STEEPLE-JACKS.

THERE are many curious trades and professions, but few more so than that of a Steeple-jack, a man whose business it is to ascend to places which apparently nothing but a bird could hope to reach, and when there to do all kinds of work. A spice of danger is held to lend a charm to an occupation. If this is really so, the work of a steeple-jack must be one of the most attractive in existence, for of danger it has no lack.

The most usual job these adventurous men are called upon to do is the repairing of chimney shafts. 'Chimney-jacks' would really be a better name for them than 'Steeple-jacks'; but presumably the business began before the great chimneys one sees about nowadays were known. Very often they manage to get to the top of a chimney by the help of a kite; not an ordinary schoolboy's kite, but one measuring eight or ten feet by six or eight, and made of the strongest canvas. Such a kite weighs from thirty to forty pounds, and costs the best part of three pounds without counting the line it carries, which may be a thousand yards in length. From each of the four corners of the kite, lines run, and they are joined about twelve feet or so away from it. After an interval about twice as great, the 'down-all' joins the main line. The 'down-all' is made of thinner rope than the principal cord, and need not be above a hundred yards long. Its use becomes apparent when the steeple-jack's assistants manage to make the kite sail over the chimney's mouth, for the instant this happens, the man who is handling the 'down-all' gives a jerk, which has the result of making the kite fall over, so that the main line lies across the top of the chimney. The monster kite is manipulated in just the same way as a

boy manages his comparatively small one. Of course the direction it takes is not left to chance ; if this were so, it would as a rule be a long time before the line lay over the chimney's mouth. The men in charge of the cord become by constant practice very clever at steering the great kite, and provided that the wind helps them, guide it in such a manner that it seems as though it were endowed with reasoning powers, and were as anxious as any of them to bring the job to a favourable termination with the least possible delay.

Once the cord occupies the desired position, it is of course an easy matter to attach strong ropes to the original line and fix up blocks and gear, by which chains are drawn up over the mouth of the chimney, and finally a cage from which a man can work.

As may easily be believed, a great deal depends upon the man who has hold of the 'down-all.' If he fails to make his jerk at the right moment, all he succeeds in doing is to bring the kite down with a run, when there is the bother of carrying it back from the place at which it started and making another try. Only a steady reliable man is given the charge of the 'down-all' ; the trouble involved in working the kite until it trails the line right over the shaft is far too great for any risks to be run when it is in the proper position.

The kite is generally started about four or five hundred yards away from the chimney, and once it is off, all depends upon the wind. Steeple-jacks like a nice fresh steady breeze : the steadiness is the great point, for any little variation in it means that the careful guiding of the kite so far has been of no use, and that it must all begin over again. If the wind is as favourable as possible (and steeple-jacks are apt to aver that it isn't often so when they have work in hand), a lucky gang of assistants may get the whole thing over in an hour or so ; but then, on the other hand, they may be three or four days trying in vain to coax the line over the chimney. Not even the captain of a becalmed sailing-vessel longs for a steady breeze more than a master steeple-jack does when he has a chimney-repairing job on, and half-a-dozen men to pay all the time that is being lost. He does not want too much wind for his work : a strong breeze makes such big kites as he uses quite unmanageable ; a light wind isn't strong enough to carry one of them ; and a wind which chops and changes about is the one that is worst of all. When one of the last-named kind is blowing, it is best to leave the kite alone and get out the ladders at once.

Ladders are what steeple-jacks use when it is a question of repairing a steeple, a spire, or a round chimney. Most chimneys are built square, and it is for square chimneys that the kite comes into use. Many of our readers have probably seen a string of ladders up the side of a spire, and have wondered how they were arranged, straight upon the top of one another. It looks as though it would be a difficult piece of work to build them up ; but it is quite a simple matter once one knows how it is done. In the first place, an ordinary ladder twenty or thirty feet long is placed against the side of the building which has to be ascended, be it chimney, steeple, or spire. A man mounts this to the greatest height at

which he can conveniently work, and drives into the brickwork an iron pin, which is called a 'dog.' It is tipped with steel, so as to give it greater penetrating power, is from half an inch to an inch in diameter, and has a ring at the end, which protrudes after it has been driven home. The greatest care must be taken to make sure that the 'dog' is thoroughly firm, and the workman tests it in every way he can before leaving it.

When the first 'dog' is fast, a running block is attached to it, through which a strong rope is passed. One end of this rope is tied to the middle of a fifty or sixty foot ladder, and the latter is pulled up into such a position that it is almost flat against the building, with a greater part of its length below than above the 'dog.' This long ladder is then used for the fixing of a second 'dog,' to which a block and line are attached in the same manner as was the case with the first. The next process is to pull the ladder into such a position that half-a-dozen or so of its rungs are left underneath the lowest 'dog,' and to lash it tightly to the pair that are fixed, using it as a means of fastening a third.

So the work goes on until the long string of ladders stretches all the way up the building, or, at all events, far enough to enable a man to work at the spot which needs attention. The ladders are so arranged with the help of pieces of wood that they stand about seven or eight inches away from the brickwork ; this allows a man ascending them to make sure of a good grip, and leaves plenty of room for his feet. Any one with a fairly strong head could go up one of these ladder-ways without being made to feel in the least uncomfortable.

The time that is occupied in getting the ladders into position of course depends chiefly upon the height of the building. Sometimes they may be run up in a day, while at other times three or four days will be spent over the business. If there are any loopholes in the building at intervals, as is often the case, the work is of course simplified a very great deal, for unless these are very far apart, there is no need to use 'dogs' at all ; all that is necessary is to get some short stout poles, fasten them in such a manner that they project the right distance, and lash the ladders on to them. A great deal of time is saved when the construction of the building gives such help as this, for it is the proper securing of the 'dogs' that occupies the time.

Sometimes steeple-jacks have to get up a building of such a sort that they cannot drive anything into it ; or perhaps they may be engaged upon the spire of some church or cathedral which the people in charge of it think will be injured by that kind of thing. When there is anything like this in the way of running up ladders, a scaffolding has to be built, sometimes right round the whole spire, sometimes up one side of it ; that makes the job much longer, of course.

Accidents do not occur so often as one would think. Men must be steady for steeple-jacking, and no one is likely to go in for the work unless he feels confidence in his nerve. Most steeple-jacks lose their heads after a time. A man may be constantly employed as a steeple-jack for fifteen or twenty years, and never all that time feel as though he had any nerves, when suddenly one

day he will go all wrong; and though the fit may pass off, it is sure to come on again, and a man is wise if he leaves the business as soon as he gets a warning of this kind.

It is not to be wondered at that a time comes when a steeple-jack's head turns as he looks down' from a height of perhaps two or three hundred feet, with nothing but a flimsy ladder between himself and the ground, which seems such a long way off. It often happens that men are seized with a desire to leap down from the top of a tall chimney, but such an awful fatality very seldom actually occurs.

The pay is very good, as it ought to be. Of course the work is not always going on. There may be times when steeple-jacks are unoccupied for weeks and weeks together. The character of a job naturally settles its price to a great extent. When a master steeple-jack is engaged in one which is very difficult he may get as much as seven or eight pounds a day or even more than that. Taking one job with another he will probably pay away half the money he gets in wages and expenses, such as keeping up his plant, so, if he could find work all the year round, he would soon be able to make enough to leave steeple-jacking to others.

It will be readily believed that this business is a very risky one. Besides the ever present chance of a steeple-jack finding his nerve fail him, there are a hundred contingencies which may render him the victim of an accident. For instance, when repairs are being executed in the case of buildings which have fallen into decay, the steeple-jack often finds it very difficult to judge as to the stability of the material on which he is at work. Bricks which are to all appearance perfectly sound may be in a state which makes it in the highest degree dangerous to trust any weight to them, and the man who has not made an adequate trial of their condition may find them give way under him when he is in such a position that he can do nothing to save himself.

Perhaps the most frequent cause of accidents to steeple-jacks is an insecurely fastened 'dog.' The carelessness of those men whose task it is to drive the 'dogs' home is responsible for a very large proportion of the deaths that occur among steeple-jacks on duty. A 'dog' may be fastened by a careless workman in a manner which leads to the belief that it is perfectly secure. It will hold all right for a time, and men will pass up and down the ladder which it is supposed to support in perfect confidence. Sooner or later, however, it is pretty sure to start, and if a man should be passing up the ladder at that moment with a hod of bricks or mortar on his shoulder—a very likely state of affairs, as the extra weight of a loaded hod is apt to be the cause of the final disaster—he may consider himself fortunate should he escape a fatal fall. As it is very usual for workmen carrying material to the top of a flight of ladders to follow one another closely, an accident of this kind is very likely to include more than one victim, for the man who is shaken from his hold by the starting of a 'dog' will probably bring down with him in his fall one who is climbing up behind him. Unfortunately, such mishaps are generally of a serious nature. The lower

'dogs' are almost invariably fastened in a manner that leaves nothing to be desired, and it is very seldom that one of them gives way. But as the workman who is building up the flight of ladders progresses with his task, he is sometimes apt to get a little careless; and instead of expending a special amount of care upon the higher fastenings, to scamp them in his eagerness to finish his work as quickly as possible. It is scarcely necessary to point out that the failure of a 'dog' situated towards the top of a lofty spire is far more likely to be attended with fatal results than is that of one comparatively close to the ground.

However, though every steeple-jack has many stories of narrow escapes to relate, the number of accidents among them is surprisingly few considering the perilous character of their work. If it were not for the truth of the adage that 'familiarity breeds contempt,' the mishaps would be far less frequent than they are. When the causes that have led to an accident come to be investigated, it is almost invariably found that the victim owes his fall to some carelessness either on his own part or on that of his fellow-workmen. Unavoidable accidents of course occur in this as in all other callings, but provided that due attention is paid to the observance of proper precautions, they should be very few and far between.

### THREE ROSES.

TOGETHER on a slender spray they hung,  
Dowered with equal beauty, passing fair,  
And blent, as though an unseen censer swung,  
Their mingled perfume with the morning air.

Not theirs the fate to linger till decay  
Strewed their sweet-scented petals on the ground,  
For ere the close of that bright summer day,  
Each sister-rose another fate had found.

Twined in the meshes of a beauty's hair  
One blossom faded slowly, hour by hour,  
Until at parting, some one in despair  
As a memento craved the withered flower.

One went an offering to a vain coquette,  
Who plucked its leaves, and as they fluttering fell,  
Whispered a test that has believers yet,  
He loves me—loves me not—he loves me well.

A maiden's form lies in a darkened room,  
In folded hands, upon a pulseless breast,  
One touch of colour in the deepening gloom,  
The last of the three roses is at rest.

### ENVY.

O Love and cruel Death, so far apart.  
Rose-sisters fair, could I but change with thee  
And choose the fate of either of the three,  
O happiest rose of all, my choice would be  
Thy place above the maiden's pulseless heart.

J. H. SYMES.